

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LUSAKA 01133 271527Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----271623Z 013410 /47/12  
O 262000Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5517  
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T LUSAKA 1133

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (REFERENCE ADDED)

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PFOR ZA  
SUBJ: THE NKOMO-MUGABE TIE

REFERENCE: STATE 93337

1. THE DEPT HAS ASKED WHETHER DAYLIGHT EXISTS BETWEEN NKOMO AND MUGABE ON THE OWEN PROPOSALS. THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME THOUGHTS.

2. NKOMO AND MUGABE HAVE BEEN IN LUSAKA FOR THE PAST WEEK SINCE RETURNING FROM THE FRONTLINE MEETING IN LUANDA. THEY HAVE GIVEN PRESS CONFERENCES TOGETHER APPEARED ON TELEVISION TOGETHER AND ANNOUNCED OPLENING OF THE JOINT PATRIOTIC FRONT OFFICES. THE PUBLIC IMPRESSION GIVEN IS ONE OF COMPLETE SOLIDARITY.

2. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO DOUBT IN OUR MINDS THAT DEEP DIVISIONS EXIST BETWEEN NKOMO AND MUGABE AND BETWEEN ZAPU AND ZANU THAT LITTLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE SINCE THE FORMATION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IN INTEGRATING THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS. THE ARMY WHICH NKOMO IS BUILDING UP WITH SOVIET HELP IS, WE

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BELIEVE, INTENDED PRIMARILY TO SUPPORT HIS POLITICAL AMBITIONS TO DOMINATE AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE AGAINST ZANU/ZIPA OR THE ALREADY EXISTING ARMED FORCES THERE.

3. WE ARE CONSTANTLY REMINDED HERE IN LUSAKA THAO WHILE NKOMO AND MUGABE MAINTAIN THEIR LOOSE ALLIANCE OUT OF CONVENIENCE, THE REAL PRESSURE WHICH KEEPS THEM TOGETHER COMES

FROM THE FRONTLINE. IT WAS FRONTLINE INSISTANCE THAT BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER IN THE BEGINNING AND IT WAS THE FRONTLINE WHICH ELEVATED THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO EXCLUSIVE RECOGNITION. THE RECENT FRONTLINE MEETING IN LUANDA FOLLOWING A SMALLER ONE IN QUELIMANE, MOZAMBIQUE, WAS DEVOTED LARGELY TO PRESSING UPON THE TWO LEADERS THE NEED TO MAKE A REALITY OF THEIR LOOSE ALLIANCE. ESTABLISHMENT OF PF HEADQUARTERS AT DAR AND OFFICES IN MAPUTO AND LUSAKA HAS BEEN PROUDLY POINTED TO AS EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS BY ZAMBIAN FOMIN MWALE. NOT ONLY DOES AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT THE PF BIND THE FRONTLINE TOGETHER BUT IT IS, WE BELIEVE, THEIR VIEW THAT THE ALLIANCE IS THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID CIVIL WAR BETWEEN THE TWO FORCES ONCE THE INDEPENDENCE OF ZIMBABWE IS ACHIEVED. PRES. KAUNDA OF ALL THE FRONTLINE LEADERS MAY BE THE MOST DEEPLY COMMITTED TO THE NKOMO/MUGABE ALLIANCE. HE WOULD STRONGLY OPPOSE ANY WEAKENING OF IT.

5. FROM EITHER NKOMO'S OR MUGABE'S POINT OF VIEW IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE HOW THEY COULD ACHIEVE PRIMACY IN AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE EXCEPT THROUGH IMPOSITION OF THE PF, AS FRELIMO WAS IMPOSED IN MOZAMBIQUE. CLAIMS OF POPULARITY INSIDE RHODESIA FROM ALL SIDES ARE AS FREQUENTAS, WE BELIEVE, THEY ARE UNRELIABLE. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT NKOMO COULD COMMAND A LARGE POPULAR BASE, HIS STRENGTH BEING FROM THE MATABELE WHO REPRESENT ONLY 15 0/0 OF THE POPULATION. WE DO NOT BELIEVE, FURTHERMORE, THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT ANYTHING BUT THE TOP POSITION AT THIS STAGE SINCE HE IS CONVINCED THAT IT IS NOW WITHIN HIS GRASP. MUGABE'S POLITICAL SUPPORT WITHIN RHODESIA APPEARED EVEN WEAKER THAN THAT OF NKOMO.

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6. ON THE BASIS OF THE ABOVE, WE SEE VERY LITTLE DAYLIGHT BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS AT THIS STAGE ON THE OWEN PROPOSAL. IT IS UNLIKELY THEY WOULD TAKE DIFFERING POSITIONS ON EITHER U.S. PARTICIPATION OR INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER NON-PATRIOTIC FRONT NATIONALISTS.

LOW

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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